

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

APPROACHING FAILED STATE STATUS:  
A CASE STUDY OF HAITI

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Since gaining independence from France in 1804, Haiti has fallen victim to a succession of oppressive government regimes that have preyed on the people and resources of Haiti. As a result, the infrastructure, institutions and systems associated with viable nation-states have progressively eroded. Haiti has joined an ever-growing group of nations referred to as "failed states". Under United States leadership, the world has periodically intervened, on a limited basis, to stabilize Haiti. This minimal assistance has never been applied with a long term vision or commitment to elevate Haiti and its citizens from the depths of world recognition as the western hemisphere's poorest nation. Left on its own, the depressing prognosis for this nation, 500 miles off the coast of Florida, is exacerbated by the projected doubling of its population by 2027. In the interest of Haiti's citizens, democratic credibility and US security concerns, the US is now on the verge of significant application of its tools of national power to rescue this struggling nation.



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## APPROACHING FAILED STATE STATUS: A CASE STUDY OF HAITI

Haiti, barely the size of Massachusetts, located approximately 500 miles to the southeast of Florida and recognized as the “poorest nation in the western hemisphere,”<sup>1</sup> has been rather accurately described by a Haitian community leader in terms of its importance to US interests, as “...an accordion. Sometimes it is large and sometimes it is small.”<sup>2</sup> As evidenced by the concerns and questions expressed by Senator William Nelson (D-FL) about Haiti during the Secretary of State confirmation hearings conducted in January 2005, the accordion is currently extended and continues to expand.

Although Haiti is not specifically addressed in the US National Security Strategy, US National Strategy to Combat Terrorism or the US National Strategy for Homeland Security, each of these documents address aspects of the US security effort that target circumstances that do exist in Haiti. Left unchecked, these circumstances not only threaten regional security but also portend the continued deterioration of Haiti, dragging it closer to collapsed state status. Along this journey, the consequences for the US and other American states do include threatened national security and an eventual resource intensive and unavoidable rescue effort.

The purpose of this paper is to explain the state status construct, Haiti’s history, how that history has contributed to Haiti’s current status as a failed state, and to present a general way ahead for US policy towards Haiti.

### THE STATE STATUS CONSTRUCT

State status falls along a spectrum that categorizes nation-states on the levels of strong, weak, failed and collapsed. These categorizations are determined by a state’s ability to “...effectively deliver the most crucial political goods...”<sup>3</sup> to the citizenry. States are relied upon by the citizens to provide such political goods as security against internal and external threats, freedoms to include the right to participate in all aspects of the political process, requisite infrastructure, fiscal and monetary systems, social systems and environmental protections. These political goods are analogous to the bottom tier of Maslov’s hierarchy that contains man’s base requirements; delivery of these political goods is a base requirement of viable nation-states. The degree to which a state can effectively provide these political goods determines the state’s position along the spectrum.

The number of nation states in the world has increased dramatically over the past century. In 1914 there were 55 recognized nation-states. Today there are over 192.<sup>4</sup> This



dramatic increase is attributable to a large degree on the conversion of colonies and the subdivision of once larger countries. With this increase comes the concern that more and more of these nation-states will fall victim to the failed state end of the spectrum. In 2002, 29 of the world's nation-states were classified as weak, 7 as failing, 6 as failed and 1 as collapsed.<sup>5</sup> Rescuing the 14 nation-states classified as failed, failing or collapsed requires "...the international community to step into the situation and resolve the instability that makes a given fragile, failing or failed state a threat to international security."<sup>6</sup>

Although this paper is focused on Haiti and its slide into failed state status, it is important to understand the entire spectrum. The strong and collapsed categorical extremes of the spectrum respectively define the desired status for all nation-states and the implication of world neglect in situations where there is no semblance of a state system to deliver crucial political goods to a citizenry.

### THE STRONG STATE

Strong states engender the wherewithal for the effective delivery of crucial political goods. We need not look any further than the US for an example of a strong state. The aspects of the US that immediately characterize it as a "strong state" are not necessarily the institutions and programs, but the fact that citizens are beneficiaries of the government. They are provided internal and external security; citizens can fully participate in the political process; infrastructure exists, to include transportation networks, utilities and ports; fiscal and monetary structures are firmly established and functional; social and medical services are available; and environmental protections are provided. These are the basic political deliverables that are at the foundation of strong states.<sup>7</sup>

### THE WEAK STATE

As mentioned above, of the world's 192 nation-states, 29, or 15% of the world's nation-states are classified as weak. The crucial political goods are not effectively made available to the citizenry for a multitude of reasons to include "...geographical, physical, or fundamental economic constraints; or ...internal antagonisms, management flaws, greed, despotism, or external attacks."<sup>8</sup> Weak nation-states characteristically have a declining GDP per capita; high crime rate; intercommunal tensions; deteriorating infrastructure; and dysfunctional schools and medical services. This category of states includes those "third-world nations" that have not already been reduced to failed or collapsed states. Not only has this category been left behind by the globalizing world, but over time their predicament

worsens , decreasing the likelihood of these nation-states ever assuming a productive role in the trend towards globalization, much less actually ever benefiting from it.

#### THE FAILED STATE

Violence, in the form of civil war and crime, is the norm for nation-states that decline into failed state status. Although the intensity of the violence is a factor, it is the enduring nature of intercommunal violence that brings the state to the point of failure. In the midst of extensive crime and civil wars, characteristically directed at the government, the crucial political goods cease to be delivered. The society is thrust into a severe situation of haves and have-nots, where "...regimes prey on their own constituents."<sup>9</sup> Characteristically, the military remains the only identifiable institution, but is reduced to a political tool that exists to support the self serving intentions of tyrannical leaders.

In situations where nation-state legitimacy is eroded by losing both control and the ability to provide crucial political goods, the nation becomes sectionalized along intercommunal lines. When this occurs, particularly in peripheral regions, clan-leaders assume a dominant role and loyalty to the clan becomes the only resort for citizens in search of security and economic opportunity. Conflict escalates between the remnants of the state, the clans and warlords that typically emerge.

The eventual impact of all that prompts state failure is uncontrolled and unprotected borders, escalating corruption, reduced literacy rates, increased infant mortality rates, epidemics, reduced life expectancies, monetary system collapse, dysfunctional infrastructure and the "...already poor and battered citizenry becomes even poorer and more immiserated."<sup>10</sup> Despite all these negative impacts, a privileged elite enjoy what they were able to steal by force from the state to "...pay for external aggressions, lavish residences and palaces, extensive overseas travel, and privileges and prerequisites that feed their greed."<sup>11</sup>

#### THE COLLAPSED STATE

States collapse when sub-state actors emerge and leave no vestige of power or control with the state. This normally entails division of the former state along intercommunal lines that result in total rule by clans and warlords. Although some crucial political goods are provided under these arrangements, there is a "...prevalence of disorder, anomic behavior, and the kinds of anarchic mentality and entrepreneurial endeavors - especially gun and drug trafficking – that are compatible with external networks of terror."<sup>12</sup> Examples of collapsed

states over the past decade include Somalia, Bosnia, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. As of 2002, Somalia was categorized as the world's sole collapsed state. Therefore the collapsed state, as well as the other levels of nation-state status are not and need not be permanent. Meanwhile the lack of control associated with the collapsed nation-state of Somalia makes this remote, former nation-state a sanctuary for terrorist organizations. As such it poses significant threat to world security and is again a region for US focus. The realization is that "Strong international engagement to bring peace internally and to reconstruct the failed state [Somalia] is required now if longer-term counter-terrorism objectives are to be achieved."<sup>13</sup> Such threat posed by collapsed and failed states makes prevention of failure or collapse essential.

#### MONITORING FOR FAILED AND COLLAPSED STATUS:

Monitoring of nation-states that are on the brink of failure or collapse for the purpose of prevention is a relatively new initiative. The associated research is limited and there are many more questions than answers. One agreed upon contributor to this phenomenon is nation-state leadership. At any given time there are many nation-states teetering on the verge of failure that have survived as a result of leadership. Leadership, even in the face of overwhelming odds, can compel delivery of crucial political goods and can contain tendencies towards internal violence, such that the violence is not directed at the state. Commendable, as the effects of this leadership may seem, leadership comes in several varieties to include democratic leadership as well as dictatorial regimes, as in the case of North Korea. Oppression of the North Korean people by the state is preventing North Korea from becoming at best a failed state.<sup>14</sup>

Understanding that leadership or lack thereof is a key determinant in state failure, the number of nation-states to be monitored makes it difficult to detect nation-state failure by mere observation of the leadership. Instead, various indicators have been identified that provide reliable warning of impending nation-state failure or collapse. The most reliable indicators to date fall into the three categories of economic, political and deaths in combat.<sup>15</sup> The many and varied indicators within each of these categories are then tracked and analyzed using an assortment of available models. The perspectives of these models range from the macro to the intermediate to the micro levels. The macro level models include evaluation of structural indicators as well as time series analysis of these indicators. The intermediate level models track changes in pre-specified events and group interactions as well as estimations of key actor positions on given issues. The micro level models track

specific behaviors within the nation-state, external responses to conflict and reports by non-governmental organizations. As presented above, the field of nation-state status tracking is relatively new and as evidenced by the existence of a variety of models, there is no standard template available to track the onset of failed or collapsed nation-state status.<sup>16</sup>

## THE WAY OUT

As discussed above, failure and collapse need not be permanent conditions. Although prevention is the preferred method of avoidance, prevention is sometimes not possible or effective. In these cases, recovery then becomes a matter of revival, resuscitation and reconstruction of the failed or collapsed nation-state. The key to this recovery effort is sustained support from external sources capable of providing "...systematic refurbishing of the political, economic, and social fabric of countries ...that are failing to perform and provide political goods, and that have become threats to themselves and others."<sup>17</sup> Only with sufficient resources and unflappable commitment from external sources can security, governance, and essential institutions be restored.

The long term nature of recovery could consume as much as an entire generation. This is realistic considering that the recovery effort and all that accompanies it entails "...jump-starting battered economies, re-introducing the rule of law, and rejuvenating civil society."<sup>18</sup> It is the magnitude of the undertaking that presents the most significant impediment to successful recovery efforts. Even those states that are in a position to assist, are already consumed with their own domestic requirements; they simply do not have the capacity to provide the kind of sustained assistance required to restore a failed or collapsed state. The monetary cost alone, of reviving a failed or collapsed nation makes the significance of prevention apparent. In combination with the security threats posed by the uncontrolled nature of failed states, preventive efforts become essential.

## THE HISTORY OF HAITI

Haiti's long and sordid history is abundant with a succession of events that explain the characteristic predatory nature of this Caribbean nation-state. Since its discovery by Spain in 1492 the crucial political goods required by its citizens have never been provided on a reliable basis. Haiti's citizenry have been abused and its resources exploited most often for the profit of self-serving individuals.<sup>19</sup>

During its colonial years, Spanish and French rule resulted in both the elimination of the original inhabitants and the introduction of slaves from Africa. Coffee, sugar, cotton and

indigo plantations prospered, but none of the wealth was reinvested in Haiti. The citizens were denied the crucial political goods discussed earlier. In 1791 a thirteen year struggle began between plantation owners, colonial officials, and emerging local leaders that eventually resulted in Haiti's independence in 1804.<sup>20</sup>

But the stage had been set during the period of colonial rule and rather than focus on providing the crucial political goods to the citizenry, the new nation-state continued the exploitation of its citizens and resources for personal gain of self serving political officials as well as businessmen. In fact since 1804 "...Haiti has had twenty one constitutions and forty-two heads of state, nine of whom declared themselves heads of state for life and twenty-nine of whom were assassinated or overthrown."<sup>21</sup> Obviously, a nation-state acting in the interest of the Haitian people has not been achievable for the past two centuries.

In the eyes of much of the world, Haiti's independence was attained as the result of a slave uprising. This caused significant suspicion and caution among a large segment of the entrepreneurial world as they embraced and relied upon slavery as an economic essential. The threat to the institution of slavery was so significant that the United States imposed economic and political sanctions against Haiti until 1862 at which time the United States finally recognized Haiti.<sup>22</sup> The new nation-state of Haiti sensed the degree of world-concern; felt threatened and responded by maintaining a large standing army capable of defending itself from outside aggression. This army was also used to enforce the mandates of the dictatorial leadership that existed. A military state emerged and "...the temporary solidarity that had developed among members of diverse ethnic backgrounds, classes, and status during the war of liberation dissipated and was replaced by the emergence of opportunistic factions that exploited racial and class differences to maximize profits and self-interests."<sup>23</sup>

In 1915, concerned with WW I-based threats to security in the western hemisphere, the US occupied Haiti with a Marine force. This occupation continued through 1934. Although some conditions, to include security, health, education and infrastructure were somewhat improved, US concern was for national security and not necessarily the well-being of the Haitian people. Despite the US presence and oversight, the typical corruption persisted. Private land owners were coerced into selling their land to overseas businesses. Political and business opponents were targeted by the Haitian army. Abuse of the citizens and exploitation of the state's resources continued. Over time the US occupation met with increased resistance from all segments of Haitian society and in 1934 the US Marine force was withdrawn. The effect of the US occupation is succinctly described as follows: "In sum, rather than fostering responsive and accountable state institutions, the occupation spawned

authoritarian regimes that continued to rely upon repression, coercion, and political machination in order to maintain their monopoly on power and the country's resources."<sup>24</sup>

Between 1934 and the 1957 start of the Duvalier regime, a succession of self serving leaders continued to erode Haiti's status as a nation-state. At times there were positive indicators, such as the rise of black leadership in place of the mulatto leadership that had previously prevailed. But the attraction of the predatory culture of Haitian leadership endured and these leaders proved as corrupt as any previous mulatto leader.

The eleven months that preceded Francois (Papa Doc) Duvalier's election in 1957, were characterized by volatility and uncertainty; five interim governments failed during this eleven month period. Upon winning the 1957 election, Duvalier quickly restored order by taking any means necessary to include "...torture and death as the preferred solutions."<sup>25</sup> The 29 year father/son Duvalier regime "...was marked not only by massive human rights violations but also by astounding levels of corruption. Instead of boosting economic productivity, they concentrated on devising different ways of preying on the population."<sup>26</sup> In 1986, despite what the Duvalier regime had done to deter the spread of communism, domestic conditions within Haiti deteriorated to the point that the US, in concert with France, influenced Jean-Claude Duvalier, president since the 1971 death of his father, to leave.

With the Duvalier regime removed, the business elite assumed control and the repression of the citizenry once again continued. "Hundreds of demonstrators, progressive politicians, and leaders of social movements were intimidated or killed, provoking the emergence of political alternatives."<sup>27</sup> One such alternative was Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a popular young priest, who had earned a reputation for acting in the interest of the Haitian citizenry. His credibility was further strengthened by the fact that he had survived several assassination attempts while fighting to improve the living conditions of Haiti's citizens. Aristide and his Lavalas Family party ran for and won the 1990 presidential election.

Despite the hope Aristide's election engendered, his administration was met with unfulfilled pledges of foreign economic assistance and resistance from the business elite. In response to these circumstances, Aristide became more authoritative which was countered by increased resistance to his policies. In September 1991 Aristide was overthrown and forced into exile by Raul Cedras, Aristide's own commander of the Haitian armed forces.

In October 1994, following extensive debate, the UN approved a US led multinational effort to send Cedras into exile and reinstate Aristide as Haiti's president. After his reinstatement, Haiti continued to experience a lack of security; a judicial vacuum; political turmoil; illegitimate elections; degradation of GDP; increased crime, most notably drug

trafficking; and increased poverty. Some of the root problems behind this deteriorating situation included the dysfunctional Haitian government, overpopulation, deforestation, poor public health, severely skewed distribution of wealth, no state-oriented economic prospects and a lack of hope on the part of the citizens.<sup>28</sup> There was no scarcity of solutions proposed. One exceptionally comprehensive solution set proposed by Jennifer McCoy, advised:

- “Discover how to create a unified national identity and how to forge a new social contract between the state and the nation.
- Discover how to revive the economy and reduce growth-impeding inequality, poverty, and the economic roots of violence.
- Discover how to re-conceptualize the state and the division of responsibilities between the public and private spheres.
- Discover how to create a secure environment and justice for all.
- Discover how to nurture a democratic culture and develop universal respect for the rule of law.”<sup>29</sup>

The tasks themselves were sufficiently daunting without the long term nature insinuated by the term “discover”. The required level of commitment did not exist. The situation under Aristide deteriorated and in February 2004 Aristide was once again forced from his presidency and sent into exile. The interim government has scheduled elections for late 2005.

Haiti’s history overflows with circumstances that have all but driven it to failed state status. References to lack of security, crime, corruption, human rights violations and declining GDP per capita abound. Even those who want positive change are “...unprepared to risk possible collapse of the whole system....”<sup>30</sup> The projected population doubling by 2027<sup>31</sup> portends even greater risk of slipping into collapsed state status, short of significant intervention to accomplish the tasks cited above by McCoy. The US clearly has interests in Haiti and therefore a concomitant obligation to develop and enforce a clear policy with regards to this nation-state.

## **THE WAY AHEAD**

### **THE CURRENT US POLICY**

US policy towards Haiti is not specifically addressed in the current administration's National Security Strategy (NSS). This was most likely an act of commission rather than omission. The Bush-43 administration has attempted to put some distance between Washington, DC and Port au Prince. This will be discussed further in the portion of this

paper that discusses the alternative policy options. Not specifically addressing Haiti was a way to develop this buffer. With that being said, the NSS does contain elements that clearly apply to Haiti and form the basis for what are the official US interests in that country. The specific aspects of the NSS that readily apply to Haiti include discussion on liberty and justice for citizens of a nation, control of drug cartels, economic growth of developing countries, cooperative action and counter-terrorism.<sup>32</sup>

The current policy of indirect engagement towards Haiti is focused on the attainment of four ends utilizing certain ways and means. The four desired ends are: 1) No illegal migration of Haitian refugees into the US. 2) Stemmed flow of drugs into the US through Haiti. 3) Strengthened democracy and respect for human life. 4) Economic growth for the country and receipt of humanitarian assistance by those who are vulnerable.<sup>33</sup> Also referred to as objectives, these ends were reiterated as recently as 15 July 2003 during testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee by Marc Grossman, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs.<sup>34</sup>

The various US “ways” or courses of action to attain these ends include primary reliance on use of economic, diplomatic and military tools of US power and the associated “means”. Economically, the US policy leverages positive economic sanctions to motivate government leaders in Haiti to make reforms in the interest of strengthening democracy and improving human rights. In FY04, the US promised \$70M in financial aid to Haiti.<sup>35</sup> In a recent speech presented at a donor conference, Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed that \$230M, of an additional \$1B in international aid, was pledged by the US in support of economic development.<sup>36</sup> In terms of trade, the US is Haiti’s top trade partner. The US provides 60% of Haiti’s imports and the US receives 90% of Haiti’s exports.<sup>37</sup> Diplomatically, the US maximizes the use of its embassy in Port au Prince to track day-to-day occurrences. Additionally the US participates actively with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) to influence relations with the Haitian government and people. In fact a great deal of the financial aid provided to Haiti is made available by way of NGOs. This provides reasonable assurance that the aid is properly utilized to benefit the citizens.<sup>38</sup> The US has also stood firmly behind the creation and expansion of Regional Organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to support Haiti and further associated US interests. Militarily, the US provides forces for Military Operations Other Than War in support of ongoing United Nations (UN) efforts to provide stability by focusing on security and humanitarian assistance.



The current US policy is feasible, acceptable and suitable. But, there are risks. Progress toward achievement of US objectives is slow. It often appears to be a “one step forward – two step backward” situation. Without visible and consistent indicators of progress Haitian confidence has ebbed and flowed together with their support, cooperation and involvement. This translates into continued illegal migration of Haitians into the US, continued flow of illegal drugs into the US, delay in the creation of a democratic Haiti and continued economic stagnation. The continued illegal migration of Haitians into this country threatens the security of the US homeland. The Bush-43 administration has “...associated the arrival of illegal Haitian migrants with US terrorism vulnerability.”<sup>39</sup> The current administration has identified the conduit of illegal Haitian migration into the US as an area of interest for the Global War on Terrorism. Similarly, the continued flow of drugs into the US through Haiti threatens the social and economic fabric of the US. Further delay in the establishment of a responsible and accountable government in Haiti allows continuation of the predatory culture responsible for the current situation. A situation where human rights abuses abound, the government is unprepared to manage crisis situations, such as the aftermath of Hurricane Jeanne in September 2004 and crucial political goods are withheld from the citizenry.<sup>40</sup> The credibility of democracy is at stake and if lost, alternative forms of government in Haiti as well as in other on looking nations, become attractive. Some evidence of this already exists with Haiti’s close association with the Chavez government in Venezuela and reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Cuba in 1996. The tertiary effects of continued economic stagnation include further skewing of the distribution of wealth among Haitians. For the Haitian people this means further impoverishment of a population that is expected to double by 2027. The potential for severe famine is real, and as mentioned above, lack of US leadership and emphasis could cast world-wide doubt on the credibility of democracy and the US.

Despite the fact that the current policy does pass the FAS test and the associated risks are manageable, interest groups closely monitor the US policy. They take an active part in assessing and influencing or attempting to influence US policy towards Haiti. Three such groups are the OAS, the Trinity College Haiti Program and the Congressional Black Caucus. The latter, as was experienced in 1992, possesses the ability to significantly influence the US administration’s attitude toward and involvement in Haiti.

In early September 2004, before Hurricane Jeanne, an OAS delegation sent to Haiti, reported a “sense of hope”<sup>41</sup> with regards to the future of Haiti; an assessment that readily indicates a degree of acceptance of the US policy.

On the other hand the Trinity College Haiti Program (TCHP) is clearly critical of the Bush-43 policy. This organization has attacked the policy and refer to it as “estranged engagement”.<sup>42</sup> This academic organization recognizes five objectives for bringing Haiti into the globalizing world: 1) US bipartisan approach to Haiti. 2) Involvement of all the legitimate political actors. 3) Elimination of the “winner takes all” tenor of Haiti’s electoral laws. 4) Establishment of law throughout Haiti. 5) Adoption of a long-haul nation-nurturing approach.<sup>43</sup> The term “nation-nurturing” was used in lieu of “nation-building” as TCHP opinion is that “nation-building” is a task that the US avoids at nearly all cost.<sup>44</sup> They therefore avoid using the term. TCHP views the Bush 43 deviations from the Clinton administration’s application of the diplomatic tool of national power as a total derailing of Haiti’s aspirations of becoming democratic and economically viable. These changes included the elimination of the Special Haiti Coordinator position in the Department of State; the curtailment of shuttle democracy, which frequently involved the National Security Advisor; and the elimination of such signs of support as Presidential visits to Haiti.<sup>45</sup>

The Black Caucus has been quiet concerning any formal assessment of the policy, but is very much in tune with analyses provided by such groups as TCHP. The Black Caucus follows these developments and engages at opportune times, such as occurred after the 1992 presidential elections. During the 1992 election, President Bush-41 categorized the Haitian refugees who were escaping the oppression of the dictatorial government of President Cedras, as economic migrants rather than political refugees. As such, thousands of Haitians were returned to Haiti to once again face the abuse, poverty and fear engendered by the ruthless Cedras regime. Candidate Clinton recognized the Haitian escapees as political refugees, but then changed his opinion in order to win the Florida vote. Upon winning the election, the Black Caucus forcefully reminded President Clinton of his pre-election stance concerning the refugee situation. This pressure, effectively applied by the Black Caucus, contributed to President Clinton’s reversal on the refugee status and his decision to invade Haiti in 1994.<sup>46</sup>

#### ALTERNATIVE POLICY OPTIONS

Other policy options do exist. They are: 1) total US disengagement, 3) direct engagement as espoused by TCHP, and 3) an enhanced version of the current policy. US policy towards Haiti prior to 1986 closely approximated that of total disengagement. Except for maintaining an embassy in Haiti, US involvement was limited and highly selective. The dictatorial Duvalier regime was allowed to exist and prey on the citizens of

Haiti for nearly 30 years.<sup>47</sup> The corruption, abuse and lack of leadership associated with this 30 year period sealed Haiti's fate as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The present day absence of domestic institutions within Haiti is also a result of this 30 year period. Without these basic functioning institutions there is no capability for the state to fulfill any aspect of its domestic responsibilities and therefore illegal migration to the US, drug trafficking, and poverty continues unchecked.<sup>48</sup> Barry M. Blechman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies stated that US avoidance of Haiti during the Duvalier period "...cost the US dearly, for example, in terms of losses for Americans who do business in Haiti, in terms of the cost of dealing with Haitian refugees on the seas and in the US and more important, in terms of the impact that US timidity had on perceptions around the world of the nation's fitness to lead the world."<sup>49</sup> Returning to a policy of total disengagement would only exacerbate an already volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous situation, making eventual direct intervention unavoidable, extensive and costly. The negative aspects of such a policy clearly overshadow any short term benefits. Total disengagement is virtually an impossible option to the US at this time, provided the US and Haiti remain members of the OAS.

Direct engagement was essentially the policy throughout the Clinton administration. As mentioned earlier, President Clinton acted in response to pressure by the Black Caucus following the election in 1992. He generously applied US resources to reestablish an elected government in Haiti. Clinton authorized the 1994 US-led invasion; created the Special Haiti Coordinator position in the Office of the State Department; promoted "shuttle diplomacy", oftentimes relying on the National Security Advisor; and made personal visits to Haiti.<sup>50</sup> The role of the US Ambassador to Haiti was minimized; day-to-day business was accomplished by the Special Haiti Coordinator and the Haiti situation enjoyed a place on the White House daily agenda. Despite the extensive direct US engagement, most of the same problematic situations existed up to the day President Bush-43 assumed office: the 2000 elections were flawed, gang activity persisted, violation of human rights was typical, dissatisfaction with government leadership continued and Haiti remained the poorest nation in the western hemisphere. The focus on Haiti as reflected in the US policy of direct engagement was disproportionate to both the criticality of Haiti to overall US interests and to any achieved gains. Additionally, the events of September 11, 2001 and the revised prioritization of areas of US interest make a policy of direct engagement even more difficult and impractical.

Despite the slow rate of progress associated with the current US policy, there have been some significant indicators of success. Several indicators that desired effects are

being attained include the surrendering of two major drug dealers by the Haitian government in 2003 and the acceptance by Haiti interest groups of the appointment of Terence Todman, a Career Ambassador, by OAS to cover Haiti operations.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, migrant flows to the US have been reduced from a high of 38K in the 1991-1992 timeframe to approximately 1.3K per year.<sup>52</sup> Accomplishments of this magnitude were previously unprecedented. Looking at the US policy as a vector, the direction is basically correct, but the magnitude or composition of the vector needs to be enhanced. Two such enhancements include the incorporation of US diplomatic and economic elements of power to create a conservatorship and to make Haiti a priority for the newly formed Office for Reconstruction and Stability created within the US State Department.

In an article written by Robert H. Dorff, the following anonymous quote, concerning state failure, appears: "...there are states that begin to fail and states that fail to begin".<sup>53</sup> Haiti's history makes it arguable that it is one of those states that has actually "failed to begin". Its history is replete with circumstances that cast considerable doubt over whether basic political goods have ever been provided to the citizenry by the government. In any case, it is impractical to consider Haiti capable of making forward strides with funding alone. Focused intervention is required in the form of a guardian-type relationship such as a conservatorship between Haiti and committed regional leader(s). Created through International or Regional Organization processes at US insistence, the conservatorship partner responsibilities must include providing the appropriate economic, political, environmental, security, and legal mentorship required for Haiti to be recognized as a fully functioning and sovereign nation-state.

The US policy must also integrate the capabilities of the newly created Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). Formed in September 2004, its mission is to bridge the gaps that currently prevent the effective and efficient integration of the capabilities of US Government agencies. The organization's focus is to contend with "...the failing, failed and post-conflict states that can become a breeding ground for terrorism, organized crime and other threats to our national interests."<sup>54</sup> The Haiti situation is precisely what S/CRS was designed to engage. The key will be timely engagement in light of competing US interest and requirements worldwide.

## **CONCLUSION**

Clearly a failed state, Haiti requires immediate, enduring and resourced efforts to prevent total collapse and the security consequences this would pose to the US. Non-

engagement is simply not an option. The cyclical nature of direct bilateral efforts of the US in the past did not offer the level of consistency required to attain the desired ends. As mentioned above, progress in Haiti was negligible following the Clinton administration's nearly eight years of direct engagement.

The current policy of indirect engagement is categorically the right option, but modification is required. In an article concerning peacekeeping operations, Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst stated that when "...a state's fundamental institutions have so deteriorated, it needs long-term external help, not to institutionalize foreign control, but to create stronger domestic institutions capable of self government."<sup>55</sup> Haiti is such a state; the reality is that it faces a very long term struggle. The multinational aspect of the current US policy improves the likelihood of the long term, consistent application of the necessary resuscitative efforts. This multinational approach needs to be supported, but most importantly, it must be closely shepherded by the US so that Regional Organizations like OAS and International Organizations such as the United Nations (UN), remain engaged. While Regional and International Organizations must assume responsibility for the establishment of a conservatorship, the US must provide expertise available through the US State Department's recently formed Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. These initiatives and careful monitoring of Haiti's condition are the surest way to turn the course for Haiti so that its people can rely on their government for their crucial political goods.

WORD COUNT = 5682

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Henrikson, *Clinton's Foreign Policy in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and North Korea* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute, 1996), 21.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Maguire, *US Policy Toward Haiti: Engagement or Estrangement?* (Washington, DC: Trinity College Haiti Program, 2003), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 46-49.

<sup>6</sup> Max G. Manwaring and Anthony James Jones, eds., *Beyond Declaring Victory and Coming Home: The Challenges of Peace and Stability Operations* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000), 244.

<sup>7</sup> Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Cambridge, MA: Brookings Institute Press, 2003), 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>11</sup> Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Rotberg, ed., *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, 10.

<sup>13</sup> International Crisis Group, *Somalia: Countering Terrorism in a Failed State* (Nairobi: International Crisis Group, 2002), i.

<sup>14</sup> Rotberg, ed., *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences*, 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 137-141.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 33,

<sup>19</sup> David Malone, *Decision-Making in the UN Security Council* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 54-55.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

- <sup>21</sup> Rotberg, ed., *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, 290.
- <sup>22</sup> Malone, 41.
- <sup>23</sup> Rotberg, ed., *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, 291.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid., 293.
- <sup>25</sup> Malone, 47.
- <sup>26</sup> Rotberg, ed., *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, 295.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 296.
- <sup>28</sup> John T. Fishel, ed., *Savage Wars of Peace* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 177.
- <sup>29</sup> Jennifer McCoy, *Haiti: Prospects for Political and Economic Reconstruction* (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1995), 1.
- <sup>30</sup> David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 239.
- <sup>31</sup> US Department of State, *Haiti Post Report* (Washington, DC: US State Department, 2002), 1.
- <sup>32</sup> George Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2002), 1-31.
- <sup>33</sup> Maguire, 7.
- <sup>34</sup> Marc Grossman, "Under Secretary Grossman Testifies on US Policy Toward Haiti," 17 July 2003; available from [http://www.haiti-info.com/article.php?id\\_article=371](http://www.haiti-info.com/article.php?id_article=371); Internet; accessed 22 September 2004.
- <sup>35</sup> Maguire, 7.
- <sup>36</sup> Eric Green, "United Nations, OAS Give Mixed Assessment of Situation in Haiti," 31 March 2004; available from <http://japan.usembassy.gov/e/p/tp-20040331-11.html>; Internet; accessed 22 September 2004.
- <sup>37</sup> Regional Surveys of the World, *South America, Central America and the Caribbean* (New York: Europa, 2002), 481.
- <sup>38</sup> Maguire, 7.
- <sup>39</sup> Maguire, 3.
- <sup>40</sup> Jennifer McCoy, *Haiti, Prospects for Political and Economic Reconstruction* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1995), 1.

<sup>41</sup> Green, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Maguire, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on International Relations, Subcommittee on Western hemisphere, *Hearing: the Situation in Haiti – March 3, 2004 – Statement of Robert Maguire*, 3 March 2004, 7-8.

<sup>44</sup> Fishel, 185.

<sup>45</sup> Maguire, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Henriksen, 24-25.

<sup>47</sup> Malone, 45-47.

<sup>48</sup> McCoy, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Barry Blechman, "The Intervention Dilemma," *The Washington Quarterly* 18-3 (1995): 70.

<sup>50</sup> Maguire, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Maguire, 8-9.

<sup>52</sup> Marc Grossman, "Under Secretary Grossman Testifies on US Policy Toward Haiti," 17 July 2003; available from [http://www.haiti-info.com/article.php3?id\\_article=371](http://www.haiti-info.com/article.php3?id_article=371); Internet; accessed 22 September 2004.

<sup>53</sup> Max Manwaring, Edwin G. Corr, and Robert H. Dorff, eds., *The Search for Security: A U.S. Grand Strategy for the Twenty-First Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 131.

<sup>54</sup> US Department of State. *Creation of New Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization* (Washington, DC: US Department of State, 2004), 1.

<sup>55</sup> Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention," *Foreign Affairs* Vol 75, 2 (March/April 1996): 84.





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